



**For Immediate Release
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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
RELEASES UPDATED WINTER STORM MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has released its 2006-2007 Winter Storm Management Plan, which outlines an optimized system of priorities for snow removal throughout the state's urban parks and parkways, including sidewalks, crosswalks and pathways. The plan includes provisions for storm emergencies, communications during storm events, and a DCR Storm Center, which functions as an operations center to facilitate internal communications.

This new optimization scheme was made possible by an expanded snow-removal partnership between DCR and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD): MHD has expanded its responsibility for curb-to-curb snow removal on DCR parkways in the Greater Boston area from 40% in 2005-2006 to 63% (330 lane miles) for 2006-2007. DCR will remain responsible for sidewalk, crosswalk and pathway snow removal.

"With MHD taking on more responsibility for plowing roads, DCR will be able to dedicate more equipment and staff time to dealing with sidewalks and pedestrian paths," said DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington. "We will also be able to speed up our response time to storm events, and the greatest impact of this will be felt on sidewalks and pedestrian pathways."

DCR has revitalized its snow removal equipment fleet in the last fiscal year by retiring older vehicles and spending \$1.2 million to purchase new equipment. In addition, DCR is leasing eight vehicles to supplement its fleet. New DCR vehicles include four heavy duty dump trucks, nine dump trucks, and fourteen 11-foot snow plows, three trackless MT5 sweeper attachments, three trackless MT5 80-gallon deicer tanks, two angle plows, four cutting edges, four V-plows, and more.

The new equipment will replace numerous aging vehicles in DCR's snow removal fleet, which have been auctioned or transferred to other state agencies. Older vehicles that DCR replaced include a 25-year-old Autocar sander, one 17-year-old and seven 15-year-old sanders, and four 17-year-old pickup trucks, among others.

The current DCR snow removal equipment fleet, including new purchases and seasonal leases now consists of 27 sanders with plows, five heavy-duty dump trucks with plows, 13 one-ton dump trucks with plows, two pickups with plows, 14 payloaders, eight sanders with plows for

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parkways; and seven Bombardiers, 11 Bobcats, and four trackless MT5s for use as sidewalk plows.

The snow removal equipment replacement initiative was overseen by a newly hired DCR Fleet Manager, assisted by a recently completed snow removal fleet assessment and cost-benefit analysis of repair versus replacement costs for aging equipment.

Another important element of DCR's snow removal improvement effort is continuing to involve key partners in reviewing and revising snow removal plans, as well as achieving results on the ground. Meetings will be held shortly with the public works departments in the municipalities where DCR parkways and reservations are located. Walking and biking advocacy groups will also be consulted to help ensure well-managed snow removal on walking and biking paths that provides for public safety and more opportunities for wintertime exercise.

To further improve its snow removal efforts, DCR last year began researching practices of other American cities with cold, snowy climates that have bicycle path networks and many commuter cyclists. Based on the results of that research, DCR will pilot new, environmentally-friendly de-icing strategies on sidewalks and pedestrian paths this winter. In addition, DCR has purchased new snow removal tools recommended by other agencies in the researched cities.

Last year, DCR used Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to create a color-coded map, distinguishing snow removal priority for all DCR-plowed parkways and sidewalks. This map is used to assist DCR snow removal crews in their work. The map has been updated to reflect changes to the snow removal plan, and can be viewed at www.mass.gov/dcr/winterstormplan.htm.

DCR has prioritized all snow removal locations according to the following categories:

- Level 1 (snow removal to begin during storm events): primary roadways and parkways, State Police barracks, traffic bridges, potential flood zones and designated passages within immediate proximity to schools while in session.
- Level 2 (snow removal to begin within the first 12 hours—down from 24 hours in 2005-2006—after storm event): secondary roadways and parkways, State House passage and street parking, foot bridges, and crosswalks and safe passages to schools, bus shelters, bus stops, and T stations, including median strips and handicap ramps.

- Level 3 (snow removal may occur beyond the first 12 hours—down from 24 hours in 2005-2006—after storm event): ice rink parking lots (if open), interior park roads and tertiary parkways, DCR facilities and building parking lots, and less traveled sidewalks and crosswalks (including some pedestrian paths regarded as multi-use trails) to be cleared as utilization and specific public safety needs warrant.

DCR anticipates continued cooperation from abutters in clearing the remainder of Level 3 priority sidewalks consistent with practice under municipal ordinances within the metropolitan Boston area.

DCR has also posted a list of DCR roadways along with its parking regulations on its website at www.mass.gov/dcr/winterstormplan.htm. The list details which roadways are subject to state parking bans during snow emergencies: cars parked on these roads during snow emergencies are subject to parking tickets and towing fees.

More information on DCR's 2006-2007 Winter Storm Management Plan can be found on DCR's website at www.mass.gov/dcr/winterstormplan.htm. Feedback on snow removal efforts on parkways, including those cleared by MHD, and other DCR-owned facilities should be reported to the DCR Community Relations Group Line at 617-626-4973 during business hours and in the event of non-emergencies. After business hours, or in the event of an emergency, the State House Ranger Base (staffed 24 hours, 7 days a week) should be contacted at 617-722-1188.

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